

DOCUMENT RESUME

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[Replacing the SSA-8080 and SSA-8081 with the Redesigned SSIRD].
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Report to Donald I. Wortman, Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration; by Michael Zimmerman, Assistant Director, Human Resources Div.

Contact: Human Resources Div.
Authority: =20 C.F.R. 416.

The Supplemental Security Income Record Display (SSIRD) contains each Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient's entire computerized master record and is the only record used by Social Security field offices that provides all the data on an SSI recipient. It can be used for developing and resolving SSI overpayments, obtaining information on an SSI recipient's record, and in some cases, for working redeterminations. Currently, Social Security uses two computer forms in the SSI program--one for reviewing initial claims (SSA-8080) and another for performing redeterminations of eligibility and payment amount (SSA-8081). The 8080 and 8081 forms reflect only part of the information contained in the SSI computerized master record and, thus, allow only for partial verification of an individual's record. A properly annotated SSIRD could be used for both of these purposes, saving over \$200,000 annually. A redesigned SSIRD, appropriately annotated to distinguish between initial claims review and redeterminations, should be provided to field offices for clearing SSI initial claims and for performing SSI redeterminations. (RRS)



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON D.C. 20548

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HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION

SEP 18 1978

Mr. Donald I. Wortman
Acting Commissioner of Social Security
Department of Health, Education,
and Welfare

Dear Mr. Wortman:

Currently Social Security uses two computer files in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program--one for reviewing initial claims (SSA-8080) and the other for performing redeterminations of eligibility and payment amount (SSA-8081)--which could be eliminated through the use of the recently redesigned Supplemental Security Income Record Display (SSIRD). According to Bureau of Data Processing estimates, over \$200,000 could be saved annually by using the redesigned SSIRD for these purposes.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE
TO THE SSIRD

The SSIRD contains each SSI recipient's entire computerized master record and is the only record used by Social Security field offices that provides all the data on an SSI recipient. It is used for developing and resolving SSI overpayments, obtaining information on an SSI recipient's record, and in some cases, for working redeterminations.

Between March and July 1977 we visited 15 Social Security district and branch offices as part of our review of the internal controls and performance of the SSI system. These visits included an evaluation of the SSIRD's usefulness. We noted that field offices could only obtain an SSIRD through the mail which resulted in several days delay between the time of request and receipt. Consequently, information on the SSIRD was often outdated by the time it was received, overpayment resolution was delayed, and service to SSI recipients reduced. In addition, field office personnel complained that the SSIRD was confusing and contained unnecessary information

which made it difficult to read. We discussed these problems with Social Security personnel who accompanied us on our visits and they agreed to further review the matter.

In April 1978 Social Security redesigned the SSIRD eliminating extraneous information and making it immediately available to field offices through Social Security's computerized telecommunication system rather than through the mail. In addition, Social Security rewrote its system handbook to thoroughly explain the redesigned SSIRD. The redesigned SSIRD now contains a standardized display format which should facilitate its readability. Social Security field office personnel we contacted subsequent to our visits indicated that the redesigned SSIRD has improved their ability to more effectively work SSI claims and thus has resulted in better service being provided to SSI recipients.

OTHER POTENTIAL USES FOR THE REDESIGNED SSIRD

When an initial determination of eligibility or ineligibility and resulting notice data is posted to the SSI computerized master record, a computer printout (SSA-8080 form) of selected data is produced and provided to the field offices for use in verifying information contained in the newly established master record. Further, when an SSI recipient is scheduled for an annual redetermination, a similar computer printout for field use (SSA-8081 form) is generated in conducting the redetermination. Both forms are currently mailed to the field offices which often results in delays in the initial claims review and clearance process for 8080s, and in outdated 8081 information for redetermination purposes. Further, the 8080 and 8081 forms reflect only part of the information contained in the SSI computerized master record, and thus only allow for partial verification of an individual's record. Both forms could be eliminated by using the redesigned SSIRD.

SSIRD Instead of an SSA-8080

The SSA-8080 computer printout form functions as a claim record review and clearance form for SSI initial claims; however, it reflects only part of the information contained in the SSI computerized master record. Once mailed and received by field office personnel, the data printed on the 8080 is verified with

the application and supporting evidence contained in the recipient's file to make sure that the proper data has been posted to the SSI master record. It takes an average of 10-20 days for an 8080 to be generated, mailed, and received by the field office personnel.

To determine if the SSI claims and clearance process could be improved and expedited, the Bureau of Supplemental Security Income recently conducted a pilot study to test a proposed "wire" 8080 message. This message, which has a different format from the original 8080 form, was transmitted rather than mailed to selected field offices for the pilot test through SSA's computerized telecommunication system. Field offices indicated the proposed "wire" 8080 allowed them to expedite the initial claims review and clearance process. However, most of them found some difficulty in learning and using the proposed "wire" 8080 but believed this would be resolved as they gained more experience. Social Security plans to begin using the "wire" 8080 in October 1978.

We believe the redesigned SSIRD should be used in lieu of the proposed "wire" 8080. Since the redesigned SSIRD contains more information on an SSI recipient than is contained in the proposed "wire" 8080, it would provide for a more complete verification of the master record established for new recipients and insure it being kept as error-free as possible.

For example, a detailed history of transactions in the computerized master record is currently available in the redesigned SSIRD, but is not included on the proposed "wire" 8080. Further, the current payment date, and amount and period covered by retroactive payments are not included on the proposed "wire" 8080. Other information desired by some of the field offices participating in the pilot study which were not available on the wire 8080 include diary codes, payee codes, notice codes, and sex codes.

By substituting the redesigned SSIRD for the proposed "wire" 8080, field office personnel would be provided with a familiar form which is totally standardized. According to Bureau of Data Processing personnel, about \$30,000 in programing effort and computer time would be saved annually by using the redesigned SSIRD instead of processing a separate "wire" 8080. Bureau officials also indicated that the redesigned SSIRD could be easily annotated to identify initial claims cases requiring review.

SSIRD Instead of the SSA-8081

According to Federal regulations (20 CFR 416.222) concerning the SSI program, redeterminations are to be conducted annually for each SSI recipient unless a change in eligibility status or benefit payment amount necessitates that an earlier redetermination be made. To conduct these redeterminations, the Social Security central office mails each field office quarterly:

- SSA-8081s which are computer printouts of those cases that only require a redetermination, and
- SSIRDs for cases that require both redetermination and overpayment development.

This material normally is 3 weeks old by the time it reaches the responsible field office, and only a limited number of cases can be worked at any one time. Therefore, the data may be several months old by the time it would be used for the redetermination or overpayment development. In such cases, the field offices query the recipient's current master record to update the information previously provided on the 8081s and SSIRDs.

If the redesigned SSIRD was requested a day or two before the redetermination is made, field office employees would not have to query the master record to obtain current information needed for working mailed redetermination or overpayment cases. Also, an estimated \$176,000 of computer time, printing, postage, and related personnel costs could be saved annually according to Bureau of Data Processing personnel. Furthermore, field office personnel would have the same standardized form to use which they are accustomed to and are currently using. The SSIRD could be annotated to indicate whether it is for a redetermination case, an unresolved overpayment or underpayment case, or an excess decision case with only minor program modifications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the redesigned SSIRD appropriately annotated to distinguish it between initial claims review and redeterminations be provided to field offices for clearing SSI initial claims and for performing SSI redeterminations. By eliminating the 8080 and 8081 used for these purposes, over \$200,000 in administrative costs could be saved annually.

Please advise us of the actions you propose to take concerning our recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Zimmerman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Zimmerman
Assistant Director